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ABSTRACT

Noting that young children learn to talk at different ages but within certain developmental boundaries, this document presents two charts to help parents facilitate their toddler's speech. The first chart lists characteristics to look for in a growing, healthy baby at various ages between 3 months and 24 months, and suggestions for when to talk to a professional regarding deficits in developing speech behavior. The second chart suggests activities that parents can do with their child, at various ages from birth to 2 years, to help their child develop speech. Activities include talking to an infant and maintaining eye contact, teaching a toddler simple songs and nursery rhymes he or she can repeat, letting the child play "telephone," and asking the child questions about books, about friends and activities, and about the world around them. (HTH)

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Learning Link

Helping Your Baby Learn to Talk

Babies learn an amazing number of things in their first two years, such as how to talk. Some start talking early, and others do not. Most late talkers are busy learning other things, but to be sure, ask a doctor, nurse, or other professional about it if your baby is not talking like other babies. This chart helps you decide when to ask.

Age	What to look for in a growing, healthy baby	Talk with a professional—
3 months	Baby listens to your voice. He or she coos and gurgles and tries to make the same sounds you make.	✔ if your 3-month-old does not listen to your voice.
8 months	Baby plays with sounds. Some of these sound like words, such as "baba" or "dada." Baby smiles on hearing a happy voice, and cries or looks unhappy on hearing an angry voice.	✔ if your 8-month-old is not making different sounds.
10 months	Baby understands simple words. She stops to look at you if you say "No-no." If someone asks "Where's Mommy?" Baby will look for you. Baby will point, cry, or do other things to "tell" you to pick her up, or bring a toy.	✔ if your 10-month-old does not look when people talk to him or her.
12 months	First words! Baby says 1 or 2 words and understands 25 words or more. Baby will give you a toy if you ask for it. Even without words, Baby can ask you for something—by pointing, reaching for it, or looking at it and babbling.	✔ if your 1-year-old is not pointing at favorite toys or things he or she wants.
18 months	Most children can say "thank you" and at least 30 other words, and can follow simple directions like "jump!"	✔ if your 18-month-old cannot say more than 5 words.
20 months	Your child can put 2 words together in a sentence, such as "car go," or "want juice." He can follow directions when you say things like "close the door." He can copy you when you say several words together.	✔ if your 20-month-old cannot follow simple commands, such as "come to Daddy."
24+ months	Your child adds endings to words, such as "running," or "played," or "toys." She likes hearing a simple children's story. She understands 3 words about place, such as "in," "on" or "at."	✔ if your 2-year-old cannot say 50 words or does not use 2 words together.

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FRIENDS, LET'S LISTEN IN AS DIANE COAXES BABY CURTIS TO TALK.
UH-UH-UH!
DOES BABY CURTIS WANT HIS BOTTLE? SAY "BOTTLE", BABY CURTIS, SAY "BOTTLE"
RAAA!!
CLOSE ENOUGH!
THUP! THUP! THUP!
BRUMSLEY

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when to start	Here are a few ideas for helping your child learn to talk. Do the first activities as long as your child enjoys them. Add new activities as he or she grows older.
birth	**Help your baby learn how nice voices can be.** ✔ Sing to your baby. You can do this even before your baby is born! Your baby will hear you. ✔ Talk to your baby. Talk to others when Baby is near. Baby won't understand the words, but will like your voice and your smile. Baby will enjoy hearing and seeing other people, too. ✔ Plan for quiet time. Baby needs time to babble and play quietly without TV or radio or other noises.
3 months	**Help your baby see how people talk to each other.** ✔ Hold your baby close so she or he will look in your eyes. Talk to Baby and smile. ✔ When your baby babbles, imitate the sounds. ✔ If Baby tries to make the same sound you do, say the word again.
6 months	**Help your baby understand words (even if he or she can't say them yet).** ✔ Play games like Peek-a-Boo or Pat-a-Cake. Help Baby move his hands to match the game. ✔ When you give Baby a toy, say something about it, like "Feel how fuzzy Teddy Bear is." ✔ Let your baby see himself in a mirror and ask, "Who's that?" If he doesn't answer, say his name. ✔ Ask your baby questions, like "Where's Doggie?" If he doesn't answer, show him where.
9 months	**Help your baby "talk" by pointing and using his or her hands.** ✔ Show Baby how to wave "bye-bye." Tell baby "Show me your nose." Then point to your nose. She will soon point to her nose. Do this with toes, fingers, ears, eyes, knees, and so on. ✔ Hide a toy while Baby is watching. Help Baby find it. Share her delight at finding it. ✔ When Baby points at or gives you something, talk about the object with her.
12 months	**Help your child to say the words she or he knows.** ✔ Talk about the things you use, like "cup," "juice," "doll." Give your child time to name them. ✔ Ask your child questions about the pictures in books. Give your child time to name things in the picture. ✔ Smile or clap your hands when your child names the thing that he sees. Say something about it.
15 months	**Help your child talk with you.** ✔ Talk about what your child wants most to talk about. Give him time to tell you all about it. ✔ Ask about things you do each day—"Which shirt will you pick today?" "Do you want milk or juice?" ✔ When your child says just 1 word, like "ball," repeat it with a little extra—"That's Baby's ball." ✔ Pretend your child's favorite doll or toy animal can talk. Have conversations with the toy.
18 months	**Help your child put words together and learn how to follow simple directions.** ✔ Ask your child to help you. For example, ask her to put her cup on the table. ✔ Teach your child simple songs and nursery rhymes. Read to your child. ✔ Encourage your child to talk to friends and family. A child can tell them about a new toy, for example. ✔ Let your child "play telephone." Have a pretend telephone conversation.
2 years	**Help your child put more words together. Teach your child things that are important to know.** ✔ Teach your child to say his or her first and last name. ✔ Ask about the number, size, and shape of things your child shows you. If it's worms, you could say: "What *fat wiggly* worms! How many are there? . . . Where are they going?" Wait, watch, and listen to the answer. Suggest an answer if needed: "I see *five*. . . . Are they going to the park or the store?" ✔ Ask your child to tell you the story that goes with a favorite book. ✔ Check your local library for programs for toddlers. Ask at your health clinic for other guides. ✔ Don't forget what worked earlier. For example, your child still needs quiet time. This is not just for naps. Turn off the TV and radio and let your child enjoy quiet play, singing, and talking.

For other ideas on how to help your baby develop, ask at your local health clinic for Frankenburg's *Denver Developmental Activities* (1987). For more ideas on things children might like to do, write to *Consumer Information Catalog*, Pueblo, CO 81009 and ask for a copy of the free *Consumer Information Catalog*.

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